

The evidence of Sir Wm. Gull, F.R.S., physician to her Majesty.

Contributors

Gull, William.
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Publication/Creation

Leeds : J. W. Petty, 1878.

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THE EVIDENCE

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OF

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SIR WM. GULL, F.R.S.,

PHYSICIAN TO HER MAJESTY.



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1878.

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THE EVIDENCE
OF
SIR WM. GULL, M.D., F.R.S.

(PHYSICIAN TO HER MAJESTY.)

The following evidence, given before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Intemperance, is taken from the third Blue Book of the Committee, ordered to be printed August 14, 1877.

SIR WILLIAM GULL, M.D., F.R.S., is called in and examined.

Chairman: Will you state to the Committee what position you hold in the medical profession?

I am a Fellow of the College of Physicians, and Consulting Physician to Guy's Hospital.

Archbishop of York: We have asked you to come here to-day to give us your impressions on the medical effects of alcohol in moderation and in excess, and in medical treatment as a medicine; may I ask you a few leading questions, and will you then add anything you may think fit. In the first place, I take it that *as a medicine* you prize alcohol and wine?

Yes; I think we can hardly do without them altogether.

Have there been any changes in medical practice of late years as to the amount of alcohol used; of course when I say alcohol I include wine?

I should say that there has been just this change: Forty years ago wine was moderately used, and so was brandy. Then there came a change, owing chiefly, I think, to the School of King's College, headed by Dr. Todd. His theory was that diseases were chiefly due to debility, and required alcohol almost universally.

Did Dr. Todd hold that that was a constant condition of diseases, or has that theory been held only in modern times?

I think he held that to be a constant condition. Formerly diseases were divided into two classes, viz., phlogistic and anti-phlogistic. Dr. Todd's theory was that all diseases were weak or anti-phlogistic, and his treatment therefore was always with brandy, or, at least, I should say almost universally in cases of acute disease. Since that time there has been again a great change.

What was the date of that highest use of alcohol?

I should think it would be as nearly as possible 20 years ago. The further course has been this: that diseases we believe for the most part run a physiological course, and that alcohol has but a subordinate value, but has a value, the value being chiefly in its action upon the nervous system as a sedative. That is the view of the present day, I think; so that many diseases now are allowed to run their course without alcohol. On the other hand, if we found a patient very delirious or exhausted, we should give him alcohol; *but we should not give it as we did formerly, with a view that it cured the disease*, but with a view of calming the nervous system during the course of the disease.

There are cases, are there not, in which what are called phlogistic symptoms would be moderated by alcohol, such as the case of a high pulse fever?

Quite so.

And therefore the distinction between phlogistic and anti-phlogistic is no longer in existence?

Quite so; and therefore Dr. Todd has the merit of pointing that out in his treatment with brandy; his merit is one thing, but his error is another.

Could you undertake to treat a fever without alcohol?

Yes; it was constantly my practice at Guy's Hospital, if I had young subjects, not to give alcohol, for the express purpose that my students should see the course of the disease, and learn how it could be cured. I cured many cases of typhus in young subjects under 25 years of age with chamomile tea.

And with no other remedy?

No, and with no other remedy but light diet.

You were watching the natural course of the disease?

Yes, it is quite safe to do so in some cases.

In those cases where there is a sound constitution and a young patient, any administration of alcohol might be deemed to be an interference with the natural course of the disease, and would not do good?

Quite so. I would like to say that I believe there is still an error with regard to the value of alcohol in disease.

Will you state to the Committee what that error is?

I think the error prevalent is that alcohol cures the disease, whereas the disease runs its physiological course irrespective of the alcohol. The advantage of alcohol is, *if it has an advantage*, its effect upon the nervous system for the time being, rendering the patient more indifferent to the process going on. I am disposed also to believe, although I think we could not do without alcohol *as a drug, that it is still over-prescribed*.

Will you kindly state to what extent have been the fluctuations in the medical use of alcohol. I think it would be a good way of testing it to ascertain what was consumed at Guy's Hospital 40 years ago, and what was consumed 20 years ago, and what is consumed now?

I could obtain those statistics for the Committee with great pleasure. They would not, however, be very good evidence, for this reason: that the staff at Guy's Hospital is various. It is a community, and we have the same differences of opinion there as you have in the whole profession; therefore you might have one man who would raise your average, and another who would diminish it.

We have been speaking with regard to the use of alcohol medically; of course, in prostration from hæmorrhage another set of considerations would come in?

Then I think alcohol *is a good drug*, and a drug we could not do without. Under the shock of an injury, or the shock which the system may undergo by an operation, the nervous system has to be deadened, and I believe that alcohol is the best agent for that. I may put it thus: Many years ago I tried the effect of the inhalation of alcoholic vapour and ether vapour upon animals; you can make an animal drunk by the inhalation of alcohol and ether vapour, and there is no doubt that you can produce the same sedative effect with alcoholic vapour as you do with ether vapour; therefore alcohol may be looked at as a sedative; it is called a stimulant, but we use more of it as a sedative; in the same sense as that in which you would use opium.

In the case of a fever patient whose temperature is extremely high, for example, would you prescribe alcohol?

We should give alcohol.

How would that act?

I think it would act through the sympathetic nerve, but I could not give the *rationale*.

You think it acts upon the nerve as a sedative?

I think it acts upon the nerves and sets them free. There are two sets of nerves; some of them are exciting and some are controlling. The alcohol may act upon one set and not upon the other. Alcohol rapidly acts upon the brain, and then, I think, probably upon the sympathetic nerves; but that would be a very complicated question.

With regard to the general question of the medical effect of alcohol, you are of opinion, as I gather, that it cannot be altogether dispensed with as a medicine, but your general feeling would be rather that its use might be diminished?

Yes, I think it might be diminished.

And that frequently it might be dispensed with altogether?

Frequently we should be better without it.

And when your judgment would show that a case could be treated without it, you most decidedly would not use it?

Most certainly.

Before we leave that part of the subject of alcohol as a drug, is there anything that you would wish to add to that part of the subject?

The same thing would have to be said of it as regards its daily use. I think there are conditions of the system under fatigue and exhaustion where alcohol might be useful, where the nervous system might perhaps best be deadened, if I may say so, or that alteration made in it which was requisite; but that is a very complicated question, and one on which I do not pretend to give a theory. But though you may beneficially use alcohol in moderation, at the same time I very much doubt whether there are not some sorts of food which might very well take its place. I think that instead of flying to alcohol, as many people do when they are exhausted, they might very well drink water, or that they might very well take food *and would be very much better without the alcohol.*

What forms of food would come nearest to the place of it in the case of a man fatigued with overwork?

If I am fatigued with overwork personally, my food is very simple. I eat the raisins instead of taking the wine. I have had very large experience in that practice for 30 years.

Is that the result of your own personal experience, or have you heard it from others?

It is my own personal experience, and I have recommended it to my personal friends. It is a limited experience, but I believe that it is a very good and true experience.

But your practice is mostly among the upper classes, is it not?

Yes; but I have had a good deal to do with the labouring classes in my life; my belief is that beer is overdone. In the case of Barclay and Perkins' draymen you can see how beer is overdone. I lived near Barclay and Perkins' brewery for near 20 years.

The consumption is enormous amongst those men, is it not?

They drink their heavy stout till they get ill.

Coal heavers drink enormously, do they not?

Yes, they drink and eat enormously.

Have you made any observation as to the quantity they take, in those classes?

Not I think of a trustworthy character: but I know they drink a great deal; gallons in a day.

Many people believe that intellectual work cannot be half so well done without wine or alcohol?

There I should join issue at once.

You would deny that proposition?

I should.

You would hold the very opposite?

I should hold the opposite.

Would you say that a moderately temperate person might be benefited by a slight use of wine or alcohol?

I should hold the opposite as regards the intellect; all alcohol, and all things of an alcoholic nature, injure the nerve tissues, pro tempore, if not altogether; you may quicken the operations, but you do not improve them.

Therefore the constant use of alcohol, even in a moderate measure, may injure the nerve tissues?

Yes, certainly, and be deleterious to health.

Have you known cases, may I ask, where the effects of alcohol have been quite manifest, although there has not been any outrageous drinking or obvious excess?

That is very common; I should say that one of the commonest things in our society is that people are injured by drink without being drunkards. It goes on so quietly that it is very difficult to observe even.

The effects are marked and distinct to your professional eye?

Perfectly, although in many cases even the man's nearest friends will not know it. I might mention that on one occasion I was called to see a medical man who was so injured by drink that he was yellow like a lemon; he was in a state of *delirium tremens*, and his system was saturated to the last degree with alcohol. I was surprised that I should be sent for, but coming downstairs I said to his wife, "I need not trouble you by saying what is the matter with your husband." She said, "Sir, I do not understand you." I said, "Your husband is an habitual drunkard." She said, "Drunkard, Sir, you never made a greater mistake in your life; he only drinks water;" which was plain evidence to me how quietly a man may drink day by day, and almost kill himself with drink, and even his near friends not know it.

Did you understand the cause in that case to be that he had drunk something every day.

He was a sly drinker, drinking all day, most likely, in a sly way.

But may I just come back for a moment to my former question; there is a point short of drunkenness in which a man may injure his constitution considerably by means of alcohol?

Very materially; I should say from my experience that it is the most destructive agent that we are aware of in this country.

Setting aside the drunken part of the community altogether, great injury is being done by the use of alcohol in what is supposed by the consumer to be a most moderate quantity?

Yes, I think so: I think that, taking it as a whole, there is a great deal of injury done to health by the habitual use of wines in their various kinds, and alcohol in its various shapes, even in so-called moderate quantities.

Does that remark apply to both sexes?

Yes, and to people who are not in the least intemperate.

Chairman: And people who are in good health.

Yes, people who are supposed to be fairly well; *I think drinking leads to the degeneration of the tissues; it spoils the health, and it spoils the intellect.*

Archbishop of York: I think I gathered from you that you thought there was also a certain amount of degeneration of the nervous system?

Where drinking is carried to excess.

But not in the case of a moderate consumption?

It would be difficult to test the smaller effects.

In cases of weak digestion you would prescribe wine distinctly, would you not?

A little, and with strict limit.

You think that may be overdone?

Yes, I think you may deal with a feeble digestion by light food and varied food, but still I think wine is useful; I should like to say that I think wine, like fire, is useful to men in these regions.

The Committee have had before them one or two physiologists, who are not so much practising physicians, and who gave us valuable evidence. I think Dr. Brunton said that there were cases in which a little alcohol stimulated the gastric secretion, and therefore promoted digestion?

I suppose he would mean *pro tempore*; he would not mean from year to year.

I think I rather gathered that, in cases of feeble digestion, alcohol would be given to stimulate digestion?

Then he would almost regard it as necessary food under those circumstances, whereas I should not be prepared to go so far. I should be prepared to advise the use of alcohol *on certain occasions when a person was ill*; but to say that persons should drink habitually day by day, I should not be prepared to recommend.

The question which I put to Dr. Brunton was, "In some of the cases in which you suggested, having taken too much food would be a cause of drinking; say a man is hungry, and eats a good deal, and eats it hastily; perhaps it is not very well cooked or very digestible food. Should you be inclined to think that the craving he feels is for something to help the stomach over its difficulties?" to which he replied, "Yes, something to start the stomach in its digestion is really, I believe, what the feeling indicates." That is a temporary use?

Quite temporary, I think.

Then do I gather that your opinion is, that with regard to the use of it as a help to feeble digestion you would still regard it as a medicine for temporary use?

I should regard it as a medicine for temporary use: when a man had reached a given age (because age has to do with it) the circulation might then be so languid that he might be in a condition to need it from day to day; that I should be prepared for, but for young people I should not think it necessary; I think one must consider alcohol in respect of age. As I was saying just now about fire, we have to use fire in respect of age; I think the old statement is true, that there is an equal use in wine and fire.

But it also acts upon the brain, and will cause the blood to flow more rapidly into the capillary vessels.

It is a fallacy to say that a man ought to take a glass of brandy upon a cold morning to keep himself warm?

Certainly.

We were told by Dr. Brunton that it acts in a contrary direction?

I should say it would.

Because bringing up the blood to the capillary vessels on the surface it would there get cooled?

You had better give a man food; I would rather eat my raisins or take some cod liver oil.

Is there a difference then between heat and the feeling of heat?

Yes.

But the feeling of heat is subjective?

The feeling of heat is subjective.

Is there anything which you wish to add upon this part of the subject?

I think I have stated that alcohol in its various forms of beer or wine or even spirits has uses, but I think those uses are very much limited by

the age and health of the consumer: I think for the most part good food will supply all the wants up to the middle period of life; in old age and disease you may often want some artificial stimulus, or something to act upon the system as we use fire. I would also say that I do not know how alcohol does act upon the body altogether, but in disease we use it very much as a sedative.

I suppose we may take it that if you do not know it the fact has not been ascertained?

I do not think it is known, but I know it is a most deleterious poison.

That used in large quantities it is poison?

I would like to say that a very large number of people in society are dying day by day poisoned by alcohol, but not supposed to be poisoned by it.

May I just ask you another question: suppose a person to be already suffering from alcohol distinctly, would the breaking off of the habit require particular skill and management, or should you not be afraid to stop it altogether?

I confess I should not be afraid to stop it altogether in most cases; on the contrary, I should think it highly desirable to stop it altogether; of course it must depend upon the age of the patient, or whether there is any likelihood of doing him any good at all. If there were no likelihood of doing any good at all it does not matter very much what one prescribes; but if the patient were a young man whose organs were good, that would be a case in which I should stop it. That is to say, if a patient came before me as a drunkard and not as a sick man, and I found his organs not permanently damaged, I would say, get rid of the alcohol at once.

And you would not anticipate any evil consequences?

Certainly not, if he were well fed. I think it is a prejudice and an injurious prejudice, to suppose you must continue the poison if the patient is well fed.

I suppose you have met with many cases in which a mere warning was sufficient to induce people to discontinue a habit of which they did not know the consequences?

If it had not gone to a great extent, I think people for the most part would be willing to take advice about the matter.

That is to say, where they have erred from want of knowledge?

Yes, where they have erred from a want of knowledge. I think there is a great feeling in society that strong wine and strong stimulants make strength.

You would regard that as a misinterpretation of the word strong?

Yes, arising from the feeling which immediately follows the application of the stimulants.

They have a strong effect?

They have a strong effect, and people feel that they give strength. I believe a very large number of people have fallen into that error, and fall into the error every day, of believing that strong wine gives strength.

Archbishop of Canterbury: Is there not a medical establishment in London in which alcohol is altogether disused?

I believe there is a hospital in London in which that practice is adopted, but I have no knowledge of it at all.

Do you suppose that where they ceased to employ alcohol as a sedative, they would be obliged to employ a substitute?

I think there would be cases in which, from my present knowledge, it would be dangerous to do without alcohol. Take a case of this kind: a man suffering under the delirium of early typhoid, so delirious that nothing can control him; the question is, how is he to be becalmed?

Shall I allow him to wear himself out, until he dies, perhaps, of exhaustion, or shall I soothe him by alcohol? I do it by alcohol, and he goes to sleep. This is the practice in a large number of cases, and it answers well.

If alcohol were not used, but opium were used instead, the effect would be worse, would it not?

Opium would in such a case probably have a fatal result.

Archbishop of York: The opium would perturb other organs; it would act upon the liver perhaps?

Alcohol is in such cases the best sedative we possess.

Perhaps we may take it that alcohol has been found so convenient that the profession has not sought for other remedies?

Quite so.

Of course the class of alcohols is very large?

Yes, we should use some alcohol, either wine or some other like stimulant.

Archbishop of Canterbury: You do not know how, in this hospital you have spoken of, such cases are treated?

I do not know: *we do very much without alcohol in our large hospitals.*

Archbishop of York: In hospital practice this state of things occurs perpetually; a man is brought in with some disease who has been in the habit of drinking largely?

I am not speaking of such cases where a man has been drinking largely; I should be less disposed to give alcohol to a man who has been drinking largely.

The question I would ask is, whether you would fearlessly take alcohol away altogether from that patient, without apprehending any bad results?

I should apprehend nothing but good results; I know there is a prejudice to the contrary, but that does not fall within my experience.

Chairman: Do you think that drinking produces many sorts of disorders?

Yes, many.

Have you gone into the question of the various diseases arising from excess of drink?

There is disease of the liver, which is of very common occurrence, and then from disease of the liver we get disordered conditions of the blood, and consequent upon that we get diseased kidneys; we get a diseased nervous system, we get gout, and we get diseased heart; *I hardly know any more potent cause of disease than alcohol*, leaving out of view the fact that it is a frequent source of crime of all descriptions.

Have you been able to form an opinion with reference to drinking in the higher classes of society; I do not mean drunkenness, but the amount of drinking which produces disorders which you have mentioned, so as to enable you to say whether it is at all increasing or the reverse?

I do not think it is increasing. I think there are certain lines of society in which it runs, but I think, taking the intermediate parts, there is not much of it. We are very much impressed by the positive cases. You find lines in which it seems to run, and then all between those lines you do not find it. I find there is a great temperance, and I should say often extreme abstinence, in the upper classes, sometimes to a degree with which I am quite struck. I think I may say that I have seen more abstinence in the upper classes than I have in the middle classes. I have before me at this particular moment a very striking instance, in which I should be very glad if I could get a patient to drink a glass of wine a day, but I cannot get it done, such is the strong feeling against it. I do not find that difficulty in the middle classes.

Then with regard to women, do you think there is any increase in drinking amongst women?

I really cannot say so from my own experience: I think there are instances, but I do not think it is a wide-spread evil. Taking my daily experience, I do not think I find alcohol so potent a cause of disease in the upper classes as I do in the middle and lower classes.

Archbishop of York: Do you think it very important that those views which you have enunciated should be widely known amongst people; informing them that a great deal of drinking is owing to want of knowledge?

I am persuaded myself that nothing could be better than that lecturers should go about the country lecturing to people of the middle and upper middle classes upon the disadvantages of alcohol as it is daily used.

Could not that be done by temperance societies?

People will not listen to them, because they carry their theories too far. I do not think you can start with the idea that there is no use in alcohol, and no good in wine.

With reference to the practice of drinking between meals—that, I presume, would have your entire condemnation?

Entirely.

Drinking without food is injurious?

Most injurious, except we should use it as I should use a dose of medicine; but even then I would avoid it very much.

Chairman: It is a very common habit in our domestic establishments to have an "11 o'clock beer," and I suppose that is an objectionable habit, in your opinion?

Domestic male servants are amongst the unhealthy classes of the population.

Do you think that unhealthiness arises from over-drinking and over-feeding?

Yes; there is too much eating and drinking amongst them, and everybody who has had to do with them knows very well that there is only one remedy for them, namely abstinence and purging.

I should like to say, that of all known things in the world the human body is the most economic, and therefore all excess is against its physiological nature. Science has not yet shown how to get as much force out of matter as the living body can. A small amount of meat and bread yield much muscular force. Excess is contrary to nature. Two laws are written very plainly in the human body. The first is of labour, or function. The parts are made for labour. The next law is of economy. With it the functions of the body are best carried on. In this country persons very rarely suffer from want, but they constantly suffer from excess.

Archbishop of York: Did I understand you to say that there is an affiliation of disorders; that the evil effect began at the liver and went into the blood?

Yes, and from the blood to the circulation, and from the circulation to the lungs, heart, brain, and kidneys. I think that is about the order. The stomach will very often go on a long time. It is accustomed to receive a variety of things. *The public ought to know that of all the dilutents or solvents for the nutritious parts of food there is nothing like water.* Water carries into the system the nutriment in its purest form.

I suppose about 90 per cent of us is water?

About 90 per cent of us is water. Alcohol interferes with the carrying of the food into the system to a certain extent.

May we now approach the subject of restraint. A good deal has been said about the restraint of drunkards until the body can form anew its

tissues which have been corrupted by the drinking habits, and until a certain amount of self-control is re-established. There are cases, are there not, in which self-control is so lost that you would have little hope but from some kind of restraint?

Certainly. There comes a time, not only in drinking, but in all other habits, when habit becomes second nature. That is a large statement, but it is so. Every one knows that the habit of drinking may at last become an overwhelming impulse; and so it is with other poisons, say opium, for example.

You have read Coleridge's life, I have no doubt?

Yes.

Do you remember the way in which, when he had a keeper to prevent him from getting opium, he used to get the keeper to go and get a bit of information while he filled his bottle?

Yes, and you cannot trust a drunkard, if he has become an habitual drunkard, any more than you can trust an opium eater, or than you can trust any man whose habit has become strong. That raises, however, a very large question.

But let us take the question upon the small scale first; would you think it expedient to allow a form of contract by which a drunkard might say, "I agree to be confined for a certain time under care and restraint for the purpose of effecting my cure?"

I can see no objection to that.

Giving his own consent?

To that I see no objection; that would indeed be a desirable thing. I think it stands to common sense, that if a man is willing to give up his drinking habits one would be very glad to close with him, and keep him from them.

Then you think it would be an expedient thing to have such houses?

Then comes the question of the houses; but I should say with a man's consent that it would be a good thing to confine him if he said, "I should be glad to get rid of this disgusting habit."

It would be a wide step from that to letting his friends put him in?

That would be a very much larger question.

[Here followed sundry questions and answers, continuing the subject of dipsomaniac asylums.]

In recommending the free use of water, I suppose you mean good water?

I think society is in a most ignorant way about water. Many people go on to this very day talking about drinking what they call *spring* water. A friend of mine, while walking with me on the moors in Scotland, exclaimed "Here is a charming spring." I asked him whether he could tell me what spring water was. He said, "Anybody knows what spring water is, it comes out of the hills;" but, I said, "How did it get there? It flows down the hills and picks up all the abominations of the moors; then after filtering through so many feet of earth, it is spring water." By this time we ought to have prepared the water for drinking by artificial processes.

Do you think it would be a safe thing for a man to drink an unlimited quantity of London water?

I confess that I do take an unlimited quantity; I am content to take it as my neighbours have it, only that I have it re-filtered.

Chairman: Would it not be better to boil it?

It would be. We digest the insects.

Archbishop of York: In fact, spring water is a very composite substance, is it not?

Yes, it is.

It contains a great deal of carbonic acid which would involve lime, which might be free lime?

Yes.

And lime might be injurious in rheumatic cases?

The question of water supply to a community is a very great question. I think we ought to have separated the water which we take with our food from the water we use for washing, and other domestic purposes.

There are cases in which distillation would be desirable, I presume?

Most desirable.

Lord Penrhyn: Would it be practicable, in London, to have two separate supplies?

I do not think it would be practicable altogether at present, but the thing would begin in one class and spread slowly to another.

We need not say anything about London water, which notoriously is not pure, but in the case of impure water generally, would your objections to the use of alcohol apply if there were a small admixture of alcohol in that water; would that have the effect of taking away the dangerous properties of the water?

I do not think it would; no doubt alcohol is antiseptic, but I confess that I should be very cautious how I used alcohol as an antiseptic in my drink; but if I thought the water so bad that it needed that admixture, I should abstain from drinking it.

I am taking the mass of people in London as the water is now?

I do not think they want alcohol added; I drink such water every day, and I want nothing added; of course I drink it filtered.

Earl of Onslow: You spoke just now of a person in the upper classes whom you found it very difficult to get to take any alcohol; was that in consequence of the person having taken any pledge to the contrary?

No, not at all; I should like to say that that is quite common. It is a mistake to suppose that cases of abstinence in the upper classes are not very common; I have seen more instances of abstemiousness among the upper classes than in the middle classes, and that is the more striking seeing the abundance which is within their reach.

Do you think that that arises from their belief as to the value of alcohol, or the example which they are setting to others?

I think it arises from both.

There is a very common experiment which is shown with reference to the effects of alcohol by dropping some upon a piece of raw liver; is that any criterion of what takes place in the human body?

No, it is no criterion as to what takes place; there is much better experience from the daily numerous deaths from liver disease in drunkards. I can mention what I once saw myself in the case of one of Barclay and Perkins' draymen. The case is recorded. The man was admitted into Guy's Hospital with heart disease; I just now said that heart disease may come through drink; he was a very stout man; he died at about a quarter-past ten at night, at about this season of the year, and the next day he was so distended with gas in all directions that he was quite a curious sight. Wishing to know what this gas meant, we punctured the skin in many parts, and tested it. It was carburetted hydrogen, and I remember lighting on his body 15 or 16 gaslights at once. They continued burning until the gas had burnt away.

That has happened in several instances, has it not?

Yes, it has.

Archbishop of York: Was that alcohol unaltered?

That was, no doubt, the carbon and carburetted hydrogen from those carbon compounds which he had been drinking.

He had been drinking, I presume, up to the last moment ?

I could not say, but I have no doubt he had a large amount of unconsumed stuff in him.

When was he brought into the hospital ?

In the evening, and he died about a quarter-past ten. I could not say I was sure that state was directly from the alcohol ; but directly or indirectly it was.

Lord Cottesloe: Would that state of things lead to spontaneous combustion.

It is the nearest condition to it, and it makes it reasonable to suppose that there are conditions under which that result might arise.

Earl of Onslow: In the case of an habitual drunkard to whom drinking has become second nature, would you, when he leaves it off, recommend any tonic or any drink by which he might gradually accustom himself to abstinence from alcohol ?

Nothing beyond good food.

Would that supply the craving ?

It would not at first supply the craving, but it would ultimately overcome it ; almost all our tonics, so considered, are tinctures which contain alcohol.

Dr. Brunton mentioned quinine ; what do you say about that ?

I have no experience of its value in such cases.

He says " One of the best things I believe to be what was tried by Mr. Fox in Bedford Gaol, namely carbonate of ammonia with gentian, and it is still better if a little tincture of capsicum is added to it " ?

But I suppose if Mr. Fox, in Bedford Gaol, had tried good food, the result probably would have been the same. I confess that I should have tried the good food alone.

Lord Cottesloe: But the good food applies to a period, whereas the administration of a tonic is temporary.

But that does not show that the man would not have been just as well without it ; he has only the experience of the tonic ; he has no experience without the tonic.

Earl of Onslow: But the object of the tonic is not so much, I apprehend, to help the patient as to keep him from going to drink ?

I do not think it is necessary ; if I had the nearest relative given to drink I would not give them anything but good food. By good food I do not mean only beef steaks ; I might give him Liebig's extract of meat for one thing ; that has been a favourite thing with me to advise ; when people are exhausted they might take Liebig's extract of meat in water with some salt, and a very good stimulus it is ; in fact is almost one of the best stimulants in such cases.

Archbishop of York: Is it a good stimulus for sudden exertion or for a young man in training ?

Yes, it is not very palatable, but it is very useful.

Is it always nasty ?

I do not think it is nasty, but *de gustibus*, of course. I would like to say distinctly, as regards the tonic, that that would be only shifting the condition. There is ambiguity and danger attending the tonic, but in dealing with your habitual drunkard he may be so spoiled, and generally incurable, that really you can do nothing with the man, but assuming him to be in a fair state to be treated, I would still not give him tonics.

Earl of Onslow: Some time ago you may remember there was a considerable sensation created by an article which appeared in a well-known newspaper, entitled " Drawing-room alcoholisation," suggesting that the ladies of the upper classes were accustomed to take alcoho-

in other forms rather than in the ordinary forms of spirits, as we understand the term?

Yes, in the form of oil of lavender and eau-de-Cologne. I know that has been stated, but I do not think that that would be a general practice. I dare say there may be cases on which a person might write a sensational article, but I have no such experience, and I do not think it is a fair expression of the truth. I do not think the upper classes are given to "drawing-room alcoholisation." In my experience I have found, on the contrary, very considerable difficulty in getting people to take even what I have thought necessary. I think it is quite a mistake if the public, or any class of the public, should suppose that where people have the means they are intemperate; it is quite the contrary. I think if I had to look for a temperate person, I should look in the upper classes. Of course there are several lines of intemperance everywhere, and well-marked lines of intemperance; but between these lines, as I have stated before, there is but little of it.

Chairman: You mean in certain families? Yes.

Earl of Onslow: Do you connect that temperance with any hereditary tendency?

I connect it with hereditary tendency thus far, that I think there are people whose nervous systems and whose habits are weak, and who, if considered generally, would be found to be persons whose deficiencies of a general kind, alcohol, perhaps, most easily supplies.

Are there not branches of occupations in which the lines of intemperance may be distinctly marked?

Yes, the licensed victuallers, for example.

Lord Penrhyn: Is it not the fact that if men are engaged in any work which necessarily induces perspiration, such as coalheavers, they must drink a good deal?

They do. Men working in foundries drink oatmeal and water for the most part.

But they must drink something?

Yes, and they find as a matter of fact, that they had better not drink alcohol or alcoholic drinks.

Archbishop of York: In Sheffield, in the great works, oatmeal and water is provided gratuitously, is it not?

Yes, it has a local name; skilly.

Lord Penrhyn: If they do not do so, they might induce disease of the kidneys, might they not?

Quite so.

Earl of Onslow: A doctor whom I consulted said to me, "I recommend you to drink aerated water in order that you may not drink Thames water." Do you think there is any superiority in the class of water which is used for aerated water?

I should think that there is a very large quantity of aerated water made from Thames water.

Chairman: What would be the best drink for haymakers, and so on?

You must deal with their prejudices. I have no doubt that small-beer would not be very injurious to them.

Earl of Morley: Or Cider?

Very small cider, but I should think that they would be quite as well upon the oatmeal and water. I should prefer that for them.

Lord Hartismere: In my country we thought we traced a great many sunstrokes to the use of small-beer, and excessive drinking in the hay-field; do you think that is likely to be correct?

The question of sunstroke is an extremely difficult question. One

must be sure whether they were sunstrokes, or whether the cases might not be due to the over drinking of stimulants. Men may pretend to drink small-beer, but they may drink anything but small-beer.

In my country they generally brew at home, but we advised them not to drink anything but small-beer, and since then we have but very few sunstrokes.

I think intemperance in any shape is likely to produce sunstroke.

Earl of Morley: You stated that there was not much intemperance in the upper classes; do you think that the practice of drinking at odd times has very greatly increased?

I think that that would be amongst young men, and to a limited degree only: I do not think the practice of "nipping" exists much amongst the established members of the upper classes: I think the area of that vice is limited.

Lord Cottesloe: You stated that there was a great distinction between drunkenness and insanity; that you could not make a man sane by punishment, but that you could make him sober. Perhaps you could tell the Committee what would be the best means of punishing a man with a view to that result, because it is one of the objects of the Committee to ascertain that?

That has always seemed to me to be one of the most important questions of this inquiry. In dealing with the habitual drunkard the first question which arises is at what stage is he to be considered an habitual drunkard. Then again, if he is an habitual drunkard, cannot you catch him early before he has become an incorrigibly habitual drunkard and deal with him then? Could not you stop him from the beginning; why not stop the first drunkenness? You are more likely to do him good then. We should in all these cases say "*principiis obsta*," therefore it has occurred to me that if it were practicable, society might make this appear more or less distinctly by its vote or feeling, that drunkenness is a fault against society. Then comes a difficult question. Many men can drink, or "carry," as it is called, a great deal without getting drunk; are they to be considered as drunkards? Certainly, society will now have to consider very plainly over what area and how far, drinking may honestly be carried. I confess, speaking for myself, that I should punish a first or early drunkard.

You have not considered the details of the punishment have you?

I have a little.

Will you tell the Committee what you have thought about it?

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I have thought this much, but I do not think that society is prepared to do it. I think if a man is found drunk I should publish his name in the district where he lived, and if he were found drunk a second or more times, I would put up the number of times opposite his name for public reprobation, but I know that society would not do that; I see no other way of dealing with it. Society is like a pyramid. I would deal with drunkenness if you would let me cut my tranverse section from near the apex of the pyramid; but how am I to deal with it if I cut my section from near the base of the pyramid where the area is so enormous? I think you cannot do it by legislation, but I think it can be done by the better instruction of the people, by providing better houses, better means of occupation, and better amusement, and fostering better public sentiment.

Do you think that the infliction of a fine of five shillings by the magistrate from time to time is beneficial?

I think it may be useful, but I would have something easy, very light and very distinct.

You stated with regard to the habitual drunkard, that if a man broke out for several days and got very drunk, you had heard of cases which, as I

understand, are not at all uncommon, in which the same man would be a useful and sober man for weeks afterwards, and that therefore you would not consider it right to proceed against him as an habitual drunkard. But if you knew that he was likely to break out again as an habitual drunkard would it not be desirable to prevent his having a recurrence of one of these dreadful bouts, in which he is not only dangerous to others, but is impairing his own health?

I have no doubt of the desirability, but I see the difficulty.

Now, with regard to alcohol medically considered, you described it as a sedative; is it not a stimulant?

I think it may be a sedative on the brain, but a stimulant on the heart, because there are different sets of nerves; one set of nerves we call inhibitive and the others stimulating. By giving alcohol you may quiet certain nerve centres, and indirectly stimulate others.

In those drinking parties which some of us can remember, and all have heard, but which no longer exist as a custom, we have seen one man under the table quietly under the influence of drink, where another man was pugnacious?

Yes, undoubtedly.

Those are different instances of the effects of drunkenness?

Yes, upon the brain it customarily acts as a sedative; it may make the thoughts run quicker for a time, but they are not very good thoughts.

In the earlier part of your examination you stated that the medical faculty were beginning to see the mistake they had formerly made in the immoderate use of alcohol, and that they were now employing it to a less extent?

In a more limited way undoubtedly.

And you stated that you thought you could get the Committee some information from Guy's Hospital as to the change of practice which has taken place; has it come within your knowledge to learn what is done by medical officers attending workhouses and places of that sort?

Not particularly.

Lord Hartismere: You spoke of a man who could carry a great deal without getting drunk; how could you deal with such a man?

There would come in the difficulty.

Because he does as much damage to himself as the other man, does he not?

I think the whole question of drunkenness cannot be dealt with by legislation; I think the whole question must be dealt with by society at large, by a better knowledge of the disadvantage of stimulants, and by a better moral condition of the whole state of society. Better information, however, will do a great deal; I feel sure that the people are ignorant of the proper use of things.

You do not think that it would be practicable to put up the name of a man of that kind as you suggested?

No; you could not do it, though it might be desirable.

Do you not think that that system would rather lead to more drinking at home; that if people were determined to drink they would drink in private?

If a man were determined to drink in private you could not get at him.

With regard to leaving off drinking, you think that you would stop the supply of alcohol at once without injury?

I think so, as a rule.

I have seen some cases in which the brains have entirely gone from leaving drink off suddenly?

But is not that fallacious; may not their brains have gone from their previous habits?

I have seen a case in which a man left off drink suddenly, and he bore the abstinence for a year, but was then obliged to go back again.

I should say that he felt a desire to go back to it again.

Could not you do that by degrees?

I do not see any good in degrees. If you are taking poison into the blood, I do not see the advantage of diminishing the degrees of it from day to day. That point has been frequently put to me by medical men; but my reply has been, If your patient were poisoned by arsenic, would you still go on putting in the arsenic?

Earl of Kimberley: In the question which was asked you, it was assumed that a person who carries a great deal of drink, and does not get drunk, was as much damaged as a man who does get drunk; can that be said to be the case?

It may be even more damaged, because he may be able to carry his system of daily drinking for a long time, whereas the other man who was incapable of drinking so much would be obliged to discontinue the practice.

But what would you say about our forefathers, who drank their two or three bottles of port wine daily, until they were 70 or 80 years of age?

I remember a noble Duke asking me that question, and I had to reply, "My Lord Duke, I have noticed that their legislation has often had to be reversed."

But would you say that a man who went on through the whole of his life drinking daily a large quantity of liquor without being drunk and apparently without injuring his health was as much damaged as a man who got drunk and injured his neighbour and himself?

I think your Lordship must look further at this question. Wine may contain very little alcohol; it may contain a good deal of vinous ether, which has not the injurious effect upon the body which raw alcohol has; you must consider the quality of the material which causes the ill effect.

Would you agree with the law in its present shape as imposing fines for drunkenness?

I am not disposed to think that I should agree to the carrying out of the law in that way, but I do not think I should increase the fines.

Then you do think that the law of 1872 was quite severe enough?

I should think it was.

And you said you would not extend it to persons being drunk in their own premises?

I think you could not. I think there might be moral reasons why you should, but I think there would be practical reasons why you could not.

Chairman: Is there anything which you wish to add to the evidence you have placed before us?

There is one point I should like to add. Of course the Committee has had its attention fully upon this question. For whom is this inquiry? That is to say, is it for the whole area of society, or is it for a few prominent cases, where a great deal of public scandal and a great deal of public harm follows? I think the Committee must consider in all the conclusions they come to for whom the inquiry is made, or, as I have repeated more than once, what section of society is to be legislated for? No doubt legislation is chiefly needed for the lowest sections, because the upper sections of society can take care of themselves, therefore I feel that one of the most important questions for the Committee is to consider what recommendations, or what lines of recommendation, should be made for people in the lowest stratum of society, because the upper classes, as I say, will be able to deal with themselves. I know that the considerations must vary very much with that question, especially as to what is practicable and what is not practicable, because the lower area of society is so enormous that it would be difficult to apply a law to that area of

society where the evil is so very wide spread. You could shut up people if you had but a few of them, but if you have thousands of them it would come to be a very difficult matter. Then I think another consideration the Committee must have before them is at all times whether the Committee is dealing with a disease or a crime.

Archbishop of York: I will read the Reference, "That a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the prevalence of habits of intemperance, and into the manner in which those habits have been affected by recent legislation and other causes, and to report to the House;" so that it includes the whole area.

Then, of course, that would take in the question of the temptations to drink, and the readiness to get it. Then the question of dipsomania has been brought before the Committee over and over again. The word is not admitted in science. There are very few dipsomaniacs strictly speaking, if any at all. The word "dipsomania" would be more properly applied to a very rare disease, in which there is an uncontrollable desire for drinking on the part of those who suffer from that disease.

That is not a thirst for alcohol merely?

No, but for mere fluids; the desire for alcohol appears to be a universal desire amongst all classes, even amongst savages, and it might be said if the word "dipsomania" were used that all savages were dipsomaniacs. It has been attempted to be put before the Committee that there are people who are subject to the disease called "dipsomania." I do not think that they are people subject to a disease called "dipsomania." They are drunkards.

Chairman: That point was before the Committee in 1874. I do not think that we have dwelt much upon that point, but certainly those who are called dipsomaniacs are not satisfied in their craving for drink, unless they get alcohol?

No; that is to say they are drunkards.

Earl of Kimberley: They are like kleptomaniacs, who may be shortly called "thieves."

Yes; quite so.

Earl of Morley: Except that in dipsomania the craving is for water, but the desire for drinking brandy induces the habit of drinking brandy.

It becomes a bad habit, and is to be punished.

Archbishop of York: What class of diseases belong to that unquenchable thirst?

Diseases like diabetes, and that class of diseases.

The witness is directed to withdraw.



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